

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -
Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad

Sunday, December 5, 2010

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

Dec. 12-16 - Erbil

-Ruminant Nutrition and
Extension Methodology
Workshop

December 13- Baghdad

-Agricultural Sector Leaders
Reception

January 9-14 - Erbil

-Ag Economics & Marketing
Workshop

January 15-30 – U.S.

-3 Iraqis Travel to the U.S. for
Genetic Herd Management
Training

Iraqi Students to Remain at Texas A&M – Working with State Department colleagues, USDA Baghdad and Washington staff worked determinedly to secure fund necessary to allow 33 Iraqis currently preparing for master's degree work at Texas A&M and other US universities to remain in their respective programs. The U.S. Department of State agreed to fund the initiative that supports the Iraqis training and eventual graduate study. Almost all the Iraqi students are still in English language immersion prior to applying and taking the GRE and applying to graduate school. Their U.S. studies were to have been funded by DoD's Task Force for Business Stability Operations.

Wasit Province's Al Kut City Farmers Receive Water Pumps – USDA Ag Advisor George Stickels along with a team of USG representatives delivered small water pumps to needy farmers in Al Kut. These engine-pump deliveries are part of a larger Wasit AG Team Project that involves the delivery over time of a total of 120 QRF-funded small 10-HP diesel-powered engines and water pump sets for farm irrigation, 20 engine-pump sets in each of Wasit's six districts. For the past several months the Wasit PRT's AG Team has

worked closely with the leadership of Wasit's Local Farmers Union, the largest farmer organization in the province, to select the recipients.



USDA Officials Talk Prices - PRT Taji AgAdvisor Tim Lowery, AgCounselor Ron Verdonk and PRT Baghdad AgAdvisor Thad White talk with a producer/vendor about eggplant and corn prices in a Taji vegetable market. Iraq is increasing vegetable production but faces stiff competition from high quality products coming from neighboring countries including Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Iran. Seasonal though not completely effective bans are announced in an attempt to limit imports.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1952 academics from the University of Arizona helped establish what today is Baghdad University's College of Agriculture. These American faculty members helped set up departments of soil, agronomy, animal production, agricultural resources, and agricultural mechanization.

Personnel Update - There are currently 32 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and at Embassy Baghdad.

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